

## INTRODUCTION

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program required tremendous changes in the philosophy and the benefit delivery of cash payments and services to economically disadvantaged families. Under the TANF plan, Wisconsin will provide services to needy families at or under 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) with the level of services provided varying according to income and assets as outlined in the plan.

## GENERAL PROVISION ASSURANCES

### **The State ensures the following:**

- Wisconsin's TANF program is designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner), provide assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children, and provide parents with job preparation, work and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient.
- The program will require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (as defined by the State) once the State determines that the parent or caretaker is able to engage in work, or once the parent or caretaker has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive), whichever is earlier.
- Parents and caretakers receiving assistance under the program shall be engaged in work activities in accordance with section 407.
- Reasonable steps shall be taken to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the federal government.
- Goals shall be established and action taken to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and numerical goals shall be established for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State.
  - \* Wisconsin provides funding for projects to address adolescent pregnancy prevention, adolescent parent self-sufficiency, pregnancy counseling and adolescent resource parenting. Based on knowledge gained from currently funded programs and initiatives, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) developed "Brighter Futures: The Wisconsin Plan to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy," a comprehensive state plan, to reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies. This plan focuses on three equally important key elements for all of Wisconsin's children and adolescents: health, nurturing and education.
  - \* The Secretaries of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and DHFS are chairing the Executive Committee on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. A subcommittee with public and private sector members from around the state (including provider agencies, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the legal system, United Way, the State Medical Society, public health agencies, the faith community, private businesses, local government, the media, and teens and parents) developed the plan and are partners in the implementation of the plan. A series of community meetings were held around the state to gain citizen input on the development of the plan. DHFS completed the plan in January, 1998.

- \* This plan established goals and actions to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on adolescent pregnancies. Through the implementation of this plan, by the year 2001, Wisconsin expects to achieve a 15 percent decline from the 1995 pregnancy rate for females age 19 and under. The standard upon which this plan is based is one of abstinence. Special areas of concern are subsequent pregnancies, child abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse/statutory rape.
- \* Although minor parents living outside of an adult supervised living arrangement are not eligible to receive cash assistance under Wisconsin Works (W-2), the W-2 agencies have been directed by the DWD to put special emphasis on providing case management services to minor parents, regardless of their income, assets, or living arrangement. All minor parents are eligible to meet with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) and receive W-2 case management services. Case management may include discussions on family planning, money and time-management, career planning, and parenting and independent living skills. The FEP may also provide a minor parent with information regarding available child care services, high school and school-to-work preparation, community resources, and eligibility for food stamps, other food and nutrition programs and Medicaid. Eligibility determination for these other programs will be completed according to individual program eligibility rules.
- \* W-2, through its policies, encourages both parents to delay having additional children until the family is more financially secure. There are several ways the W-2 program encourages the prevention and reduction of the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies for the adult population served by W-2: 1) Flat grants: Like employment, W-2 provides cash payments based on participation, not family size. If a individual fails to participate, his or her payment is reduced by \$5.15 per hour. 2) Family cap: W-2 does treat parents who have additional children while on assistance differently. Parents caring for a child under 12 weeks old receive a payment of \$673 per month and are exempt from participation requirements and time limits. However, if a child is born more than 10 months after the date the individual is first determined eligible for W-2, the parent is subject to the time limit unless the birth was the result of sexual assault or incest. 3) Case management: FEPs may counsel participants to delay subsequent births or provide referrals to family planning services.
- \* As part of the Case Management Training Series, Wisconsin is providing a participant guide on Employment-Focused Family Planning. The base of information developed will continue to be utilized in W-2 to assist participants in making choices about their career and family, encourage the use of resources available to them and make appropriate referrals based on their needs. Each W-2 agency will maintain a list of family planning referral agencies and health care providers.
- Wisconsin will conduct a program that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded in scope to include men. The Wisconsin DHFS' plan to reduce adolescent pregnancies addresses the issue of male responsibility, with programs developed for adolescent males. In addition, the Department is concerned with, and will be providing, programming related to statutory rape and the issue of adult males who impregnate young teenage females. These

programs will involve state and local law enforcement officials, the educational system, the relevant counseling system and the community at large.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Through the biennial budget process, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee meetings and other public forums, there has been an ongoing public dialogue regarding the Wisconsin TANF program. As a means of soliciting comments from the public on the draft TANF plan, the Department took a number of steps to publicize the availability of the draft Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1999-FFY 2000 TANF plan and provide an opportunity to comment. Information on the draft TANF plan was presented in June 1998 at the regular monthly Income Maintenance Advisory Committee and the W-2 Contract and Implementation Committee meetings.

In mid-July 1998, the Department mailed copies of the draft plan, with information regarding the opportunity to comment through the public hearing process to 600 groups and individuals, including the W-2 agencies, Division of Economic Support (DES) Area Administrators and Assistant Area Administrators, child care coordinators, child support agencies, directors of county departments of human services and social services, tribal economic support workers and the Great Lakes Intertribal Council.

As part of this public comment process, the Department scheduled and conducted four public hearings around the state in August 1998: Mosinee, August 10, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.; Madison, August 20, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon; Eau Claire, August 24, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.; and Milwaukee, August 26, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Notices of these hearings were published in the Sunday, July 26, 1998, edition of the Wausau paper and the Sunday, August 9, 1998, editions of the Milwaukee, Madison and Eau Claire papers. The public hearing notice included information on where to write to obtain a copy of the plan, how to access the plan on the Department's internet page (<http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/>) and the opportunity to submit written comments. Written comments on the plan were accepted by the Department for consideration through September 11, 1998.

The Department received a limited number of comments on the plan through this process. The Department made only one change in response to the public comments. The majority of the comments would require a statutory language change. Statutory language changes cannot be made until the legislature returns in February 1999.

## **FEDERAL TANF PROGRAMS**

### **W-2 PROGRAM DELIVERY SYSTEM**

#### **Introduction**

Wisconsin was notified by the Administration for Children and Families, federal Department of Health and Human Services, that effective September 30, 1996, the state's TANF plan was found to contain the necessary elements to qualify as an "eligible state" for purposes of receiving block grant funding under the TANF program. Wisconsin's plan was designed with the purpose of TANF block grants, described under Section 401 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), as its foundation.

In September 1997, the W-2 program was implemented statewide. The majority of families served under Wisconsin's TANF program, are participants in W-2. During the first six months of implementation, the existing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) caseload was transitioned over to W-2, while new applicants were immediately placed into W-2. Since implementation, Wisconsin has seen a further reduction in an already declining caseload of cash recipients, as parents are transitioned into unsubsidized employment.

W-2's success lies in its philosophy that most individuals can become valuable members of the workforce, and all are capable of making some contribution through work. Under W-2, parents are afforded the opportunity to provide for their own family and enjoy the pride inherent in self-reliance. This is accomplished through the provision of short-term education and training coupled with work training activities which are transferable to regular unsubsidized employment.

Community involvement is another key aspect of the W-2 program. Collaboration between employers, community resources, the business community, advocate groups and government programs creates an environment that translates into jobs and positive community involvement for low-income workers statewide. Community Steering Committees are public/private partnerships established under legislation to provide ties to W-2 agencies, with strong leadership from the business sector. They serve as problem-solving boards to the local agencies and collaborate with the Children's Services Network, a one-stop access to all supportive services in the county that benefit children and families.

In the wake of a declining W-2 caseload comes new challenges for Wisconsin. As W-2 agencies continue to transition participants into unsubsidized employment, the remaining caseload is comprised mainly of individuals with more severe barriers to employment. State and local program staff continue to work together to identify the most effective strategies for serving this population.

A 1997 article by Alan M. Hershey and LaDonna A. Pavetti titled "Turning Job Finders into Job Keepers" cited studies that have found between 25 percent and 40 percent of the women who left welfare for work returned to AFDC within a year. Through W-2, Wisconsin seeks to reduce the rate of recidivism by providing the necessary supportive services and financial incentives for low-income parents to gain a foothold in unsubsidized employment. This is particularly important because of the 60-month lifetime eligibility limit. Participants who begin employment may receive child care and transportation assistance, job survival/retention techniques, guidance in making career decisions, and other employment services to help them maintain employment.

The greatest challenge Wisconsin faces is to help families break the intergenerational cycle of welfare. This is being addressed through programs and policies which:

1. Improve the network of employment services available to Wisconsin's job seekers, with special emphasis on those individuals most difficult to serve;
2. Encourage teenagers to begin developing career goals while still in high school; and
3. Instill a greater sense of financial and emotional responsibility in non-custodial parents. W-2 is about more than making a better living; it's about making a better life.

### **W-2 Program Access**

W-2 agencies were awarded W-2 contracts for the period January 1, 2000, through December 31, 2001. There are 72 W-2 Agencies in 79 regions of the state. The agencies include a combination of public and private agencies, selected through a competitive process.

#### **Twelve W-2 Regions are Operated by Six Private Non-Profit Agencies**

*Forward Services Corporation* - Kewaunee; Florence  
*Forward Services Corporation Consortium* – Forest; Oneida; Vilas  
*Western Wisconsin Private Industry Council* – Juneau; Monroe

*United Migrant Opportunity Services* - Milwaukee County Region II  
*Opportunities Industrialization Center of Greater Milwaukee* - Milwaukee County Region III  
*Employment Solutions Consortium (Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin)* - Milwaukee County Region IV and V  
*Shawano County Job Center* - Shawano

#### **Four W-2 Regions are Operated by Four Private For-Profit Agencies**

*MAXIMUS* - Milwaukee County Region VI  
*Curtis & Associates* - Waukesha  
*Kaiser Group* - Walworth  
*YW Works* – Milwaukee County Region I

#### **Sixty-three W-2 Regions are Operated by County/Tribal Agencies**

- 57 W-2 agencies are county human/social services agencies including one county consortium acting on behalf of four additional county human/social services agencies.
- 2 W-2 agencies are Tribes: Bad River; Oneida;

**In addition, five Tribes developed a TANF plan and are working directly with the federal government:** Red Cliff, Stockbridge-Munsee, Potawatomi and Sokaogon, and Lac du Flambeau .

All W-2 agencies are either collocated or electronically linked to Job Centers in each W-2 geographic area. Job Centers provide one-stop shopping for employers to meet workforce needs and for job seekers to obtain career planning, job placement and advancement, and training at the local level. Job Centers are open to all job seekers, including W-2 participants.

### **Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) Role**

The FEP is central to W-2 integrated case management and is the primary individual who performs and/or monitors all case management services for the W-2 participant. This approach allows a simplified process for the participating family and is more likely to help build a supportive relationship between the participant and the FEP.

A FEP provides:

- W-2 eligibility determination
- W-2 employment position placement
- Employability Plan (EP) development
- Case management
- Referrals to the child support agency
- All other support services for a participant in a W-2 employment or work training position

### **Supportive Services Planner (SSP) Role**

An applicant may decide to request only supportive services. If the applicant/participant is not eligible for, or does not request a W-2 employment position, the Supportive Services Planner (SSP) determines eligibility and provides for the delivery of services which may include:

- food stamps
- Medicaid/BadgerCare
- Emergency Assistance
- transportation assistance
- child care
- referrals to the child support agency

### **W-2 ELIGIBILITY**

The primary purpose of W-2 is to prepare eligible parents, who are not job-ready, for unsubsidized employment to help them provide for their families and become self-sufficient members of the community in which they live. There are four categories of individual who may be eligible for services of the W-2 program:

- Custodial parents of minor children may access all W-2 services.
- Non-custodial parents, subject to a support order for a child, may receive case management services.
- Pregnant women, with no other born children, may receive case management services.
- All minor parents are eligible to receive W-2 case management services.

Applicants must meet both nonfinancial and financial eligibility criteria to be considered for a W-2 employment position, a Job Access Loan and certain case management services.

### **Income Limits**

The W-2 group's income must be at or below 115 percent of the federal poverty level.

### **Asset Limits**

The W-2 group's assets cannot exceed \$2,500, excluding the combined equity value of vehicles up to \$10,000 and one home that serves as the homestead.

### **Cooperation with Child Support**

Applicants or participants must cooperate with child support enforcement efforts to be eligible for W-2 services. The determination of whether an applicant is cooperating with child support enforcement efforts is made by the child support agency. An applicant or participant may claim good cause for refusal to cooperate at any time during the application process or once found eligible for W-2 services. It is the W-2 agency's responsibility to make a determination of good cause in each case.

### **Residency Requirement**

W-2 applicants must verify that they are currently residents of Wisconsin. With the exception of migrant workers, W-2 applicants must also demonstrate an intent to continue to reside in the state.

### **Accessing Other Sources of Income**

A W-2 applicant may be required to apply for and accept other public assistance programs or resources that may be available, prior to being determined eligible for W-2 services. Applicants who refuse to cooperate are not eligible for a W-2 employment position or a Job Access Loan.

## **W-2 PROGRAM TIME LIMITS**

### **60-Month Time-Limited W-2 Payment Policy**

Both federal TANF and state W-2 legislation include a 60-month lifetime limit for eligibility. The time-limits were first applied to AFDC recipients participating in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program beginning on October 1, 1996. Therefore, the earliest a W-2 participant may reach the 60-month limit will be October 1, 2001. W-2 agencies may extend the time-limits on a case-by-case basis because of circumstances including:

1. The adult W-2 group member is unable to work because of personal disability or incapacitation;
2. The adult W-2 group member has significant limitations to employment;
3. The adult W-2 group member is needed in the home to care for another severely incapacitated group member; or
4. The adult group member has made all appropriate efforts to find work, and is unable to find unsubsidized employment because local labor market conditions preclude a reasonable job opportunity.

### **24-Month Time Limit for Subsidized Employment Positions**

Participation in any W-2 employment and training position category (Trial Job, Community Service Job (CSJ), and W-2 Transition (W-2 T)) is limited to 24 cumulative months. Extensions to the time limits may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

## **W-2 EMPLOYMENT AND WORK TRAINING FOR CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

W-2's goal is to connect parents with appropriate work or work training as soon as possible. This is done by immediate placement in a W-2 employment or work training level:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Trial Jobs
- CSJs



- W-2 T

A participant enters the highest possible employment or work training level according to ability and is expected to move up to the next appropriate level at the earliest opportunity. Each new placement brings with it increased income and greater family self-sufficiency.

### **Unsubsidized Employment**

Unsubsidized employment is the highest and most desirable level in this employment or work training system. The FEP must first consider unsubsidized employment for any W-2 applicant who has a strong employment history and skills. Individuals may be placed at this level if they are working in unsubsidized employment and do not have barriers to full-time employment, or they are unemployed, but have been assessed as having the capability of obtaining immediate full-time employment. There are no W-2 cash payments for individuals placed at this level and case management services are provided on a voluntary basis.

Case management services for employed individuals placed in Unsubsidized Employment include, but are not limited to:

- Providing guidance in career decision making skills;
- Exploring career options;
- Identifying vocational opportunities;
- Researching training information;
- Creating or updating a resume;
- Developing networking skills;
- Providing referrals to other community resources; and
- Providing job survival/retention techniques.

Case management services for unemployed individuals placed in Unsubsidized Employment include, but are not limited to:

- Providing assistance in creating a financial plan;
- Establishing employment goals;
- Providing information about job openings;
- Improving job interview skills;
- Completing job applications;
- Writing a resume;
- Arranging job interviews with employers; and
- Contacting employers on the individual's behalf.

### **Follow-Up Case Management Services**

Participants who progress from a subsidized employment position to an unsubsidized position receive follow-up case management services for at least 6 months to support job retention. W-2 agencies may provide follow-up case management services beyond the mandatory 6-month period regardless of the individual's income and asset levels.

The case management services may include:

- Employment skills training;
- English-as-a-Second Language classes if the W-2 agency determines that the course will facilitate the individual's efforts to retain employment;

- A course of study meeting the standards for the granting of a declaration of equivalency of high school graduation; or
- Other remedial education courses.

Wisconsin encourages W-2 agencies to provide services beyond the 6-month period to prevent recidivism and ensure employment stability. There is no time limit on these services.

### **Subsidized Employment and Work Training**

If good faith attempts to obtain employment have been unsuccessful, or if the W-2 agency determines that an applicant is not prepared for unsubsidized employment, the applicant may be offered a W-2 work training placement. Individuals placed in one of the three W-2 work training placements, Trial Jobs, CSJs or W-2 T, may be required to continue appropriate ongoing employment search with the assistance of the W-2 agency, while participating in a W-2 work training placement.

### **Trial Jobs**

Trial Jobs are W-2 subsidized work training placements, intended to encourage employers to give permanent opportunities to individuals who appear job ready, but have a weak work history. The W-2 agency contracts with the employer and pays the employer a subsidy (up to \$300 per month) with the expectation that if the W-2 participant performs satisfactorily, the employer will offer that participant permanent employment. The wage subsidy to the employer may be used flexibly at the Trial Job employer's discretion for training, transportation, or as an offset to employment costs.

An individual may participate in a Trial Job for a maximum of three months with an opportunity for a three-month extension in the rare instances where the additional time is needed to assure job readiness. The total number of months an individual may participate at the Trial Job level is 24 months. The Trial Job employer must pay at least the minimum federal or state wage per hour and must pay wages and benefits comparable to those received by regular employees in similarly classified positions for every hour worked.

### **Community Service Jobs (CSJ)**

The CSJ work training placement is for individuals who are determined not ready for immediate regular employment, particularly where attempts to place a participant in an unsubsidized or Trial Job have not succeeded. CSJs are intended to provide participants with an opportunity to develop or improve work habits and skills that are necessary to succeed in any regular job environment, including punctuality, reliability, work social skills (such as learning to get along with co-workers) and the application of a sustained and productive effort. A prorated CSJ placement may be appropriate for individuals who are already working in an unsubsidized job less than 30 hours per week and where attempts to increase the number of hours in their current job or to find additional unsubsidized employment have not succeeded.

CSJ participants are generally expected to participate 40 hours per week - up to 30 hours per week of work training activities and up to 10 hours of education and training. CSJ participants eligible for a prorated CSJ payment are also expected to participate up to 40 hours per week in a combination of hours in their unsubsidized job, work training activities and education and training activities. The participant is assigned CSJ activities that do not interfere with the hours they are expected to work at the unsubsidized job.

An individual is permitted to participate at the CSJ level for no more than 24 months. Each CSJ position may be scheduled for a period of up to six months with an opportunity for a three-month

extension in the rare instances where readiness for regular employment is slow to develop. A monthly CSJ benefit is \$673 with a reduction of \$5.15 for each hour that the participant fails, without good cause, to participate in assigned activities. Prorated CSJ payments are based on the number of hours the participant is assigned to work training:

- 1/3 CSJ: \$230 for up to 10 hours of work training and up to 10 hours of education and training per week.
- 1/2 CSJ: \$341 for 11 to 15 hours of work training and up to 10 hours of education and training per week.
- 2/3 CSJ: \$452 for 16 to 20 hours of work training and up to 10 hours of education and training per week.\_\_\_\_

CSJ work training providers are expected to offer real work training opportunities with appropriate supervision within an environment which generally replicates that of regular employment, realizing that job coaching and mentoring may be needed to help the participant succeed.

CSJ participants may be required to participate up to 10 hours per week in education and training activities assigned as part of an Employability Plan. Permissible education and training activities include, but are not limited to:

- A course of study for the granting of a declaration of equivalency of high school graduation;
- Technical college courses and educational courses that provide an employment skill;
- English-as-a-Second-Language; and
- Parenting, life skills, job skills or other adult basic education.

An 18 or 19 year old CSJ participant who has not obtained a high school diploma or a declaration of high school graduation may attend a high school or GED course of study to satisfy, in whole or in part, the required hours of participation in a CSJ.

### **W-2 Transition (W-2 T)**

The W-2 T work training placement is for individuals who have been determined to have multiple barriers to employment and are unable to successfully participate in one of the other W-2 work training placements or unsubsidized employment for reasons such as alcohol or drug abuse; an individual's incapacitation; or the need to remain in the home to care for another W-2 group member who has a severe incapacitation or disability. An individual can participate in a W-2 T position for a maximum of 24 months. This period may be extended on a case-by-case basis by the W-2 agency.

Participants in W-2 T are placed in full-time activity whenever possible. An in-depth assessment is completed with appropriate professionals when necessary. Based on the results of the assessment, which takes into consideration the limits of ability, the participant may be assigned up to 28 hours per week of work training activities and 12 hours per week of education and training. A monthly W-2 T benefit is \$628 with a reduction of \$5.15 for each hour that the participant fails without good cause to participate in assigned activities.

W-2 T work training activities which may be approved by the W-2 agency include:

- Community rehabilitation program - a program that provides directly or facilitates the provision of vocational rehabilitation to individuals with disabilities and that enables an individual with a disability to maximize opportunities for employment;

- Activities similar to a CSJ but with more supervision; and
- Volunteer activity.

Other W-2 T activities which may be approved by the W-2 agency include:

- Alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) services not covered by Medicaid, including evaluation, detoxification, assessment and treatment programs;
- Mental health activities, as prescribed by an appropriate health care professional;
- Counseling or physical rehabilitation activities;
- Court ordered activities;
- English-as-a-Second Language;
- Activities related to obtaining shelter or retaining safety in a domestic abuse situation or other activities needed to stabilize a family;
- Other activities that the agency determines are consistent with the capabilities of the participant;
- Caring for a family member with an incapacity of such severity that without home care, the incapacitated member's health and well-being would be significantly affected, as determined by the W-2 agency;
- Caring for a family member who is incapacitated to the degree that only marginal employment is attainable; and
- Activities to support the marginal employment and move the family with special needs closer to self-sufficiency (e.g. parenting, life skills classes, activities at the school, etc.).

W-2 T participants may be required to participate up to 12 hours per week in education and training activities assigned as part of an Employability Plan. Permissible education and training activities include, but are not limited to:

- A course of study for the granting of a declaration of equivalency of high school graduation;
- Technical college courses and educational courses that provide an employment skill; and
- Parenting, life skills, job skills or other adult basic education.

### **Technical College Participation Under CSJ and W-2 T**

If the agency determines that an individual is unable to obtain unsubsidized employment without additional training, the participant may be allowed to participate in a technical college education program for a maximum of two years if the agency has determined that the program will likely lead to employment. An individual placed in a CSJ or W-2 T may participate in a technical college education program as part of that placement if all of the following requirements are met:

1. The participant maintains full-time status in the technical college education program, as determined by the technical college the participant attends, and regularly attends all classes;
2. The participant maintains a grade point average of at least 2.0 (or the equivalent, as determined by the technical college); and
3. The participant is employed or engages in work activities under a CSJ or W-2 T for 25 hours per week in addition to class time.

### **Assistance to Custodial Parent of an Infant**

A custodial parent of a child who is 12 weeks old or less and who meets the financial and nonfinancial eligibility requirements for W-2 work training placements may receive a monthly payment of \$673 and will not be required to participate in an employment position unless s/he volunteers to participate. A parent may only receive the custodial parent of an infant benefit if

no other adult member of the custodial parent's W-2 group is participating or eligible to participate in a W-2 work training placement or working in an unsubsidized job.

The custodial parent is eligible for benefits beginning on the date of the child's birth or the W-2 begin date, whichever is later. If the parent is still eligible for W-2 and not able to obtain unsubsidized employment when the child reaches 12 weeks, s/he may be immediately placed in a W-2 work training placement.

### **Two-Parent Family Participation**

W-2 philosophy strongly emphasizes the responsibility both parents have to care for and support their children. The first parent, the parent placed in a W-2 employment position, must participate in up to 40 hours of W-2 activities per week. If the family is also receiving federally funded child care, the other parent must participate in W-2 activities equal to the difference between 55 hours and the number of hours the parent who is placed in the employment position participates in assigned activities per week. The other parent may be assigned to activities including unsubsidized employment, on-the-job training (which is non-W-2 funded) or work training experience. Additional activities above the minimum required may be assigned based on a determination by the FEP that the activities will best prepare the other parent for unsubsidized employment.

The other parent in a two-parent family not receiving federally funded child care may be offered the opportunity to participate in W-2 activities, but participation is not mandatory. If the offer to participate in activities is accepted, the FEP identifies appropriate activities for both parents taking into consideration the schedules of the parents and children in order to accommodate the family's request not to receive child care.

## **OTHER ELEMENTS OF W-2 WORK-BASED PARTICIPATION**

### **Employability Plan (EP)**

An EP outlines employment goals developed jointly by the FEP and the participant. The EP may also identify basic and immediate family needs (food, clothing, shelter, health care, etc.) that are needed before the family can expect to achieve and/or maintain economic self-sufficiency.

### **Educational Needs Assessment**

Agencies must conduct an educational needs assessment for any individual for whom they determine that the appropriate placement is Unsubsidized Employment or a Trial Job. If the individual is in need of basic education, including a course of study meeting the standards established for the granting of a declaration of equivalency of high school graduation, and the individual wishes to pursue basic education, the activity is included in the individual's Employability Plan (EP). Basic education activities identified may include:

- Writing skills;
- Math skills;
- Improving literacy;
- Remedial education;
- HSED/GED preparation classes;
- English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)

W-2 agencies must pay for the basic education services identified in the EP.

### **W-2 Fact Finding Process**

Individuals who believe that an agency decision regarding any component of W-2 (e.g. employment positions, Job Access Loans, Child Care, Emergency Assistance) is incorrect may request a Fact Finding review by the W-2 agency. The W-2 agency must respond by completing an expeditious review of the case to prevent harm to the client in the event of an agency error. The Fact Finding review is an informal process to resolve issues, explain the proposed action or inaction, and permit the petitioner to present information. Each W-2 agency must have at least one individual assigned to complete Fact Finding reviews. The fact finder must be neutral and provide an objective review and decision on the Fact Finding request. W-2 agencies are bound by the Fact Finding decision for a particular case and must comply with the decision within 10 days of the decision date.

A second level of review is completed by the Department of Administration, Division of Hearings and Appeals (DHA) if the applicant or participant petitions the DHA for a review of the W-2 Fact Finding decision. This review is limited to review of the record and the decision of the fact finder. The W-2 agency may also request DHA to review a Fact Finding decision at any time.

If a Fact Finding decision overturns the agency's action of denying W-2 payments, at either level of review, the W-2 agency shall place the individual in the first appropriate employment position. Payment begins on the date the individual begins participation and no retroactive cash payment for the period prior to participation shall be issued. The W-2 agency is required to restore any payments that were improperly calculated, reduced or terminated retroactive to the date of occurrence.

### **Child Care and W-2 Participation**

A single parent placed in a CSJ or W-2 T position cannot be assigned work activities during a period of time s/he is unable to obtain child care for a child under the age of thirteen. However, the participant may be assigned to other activities which may be performed in the home. FEPs must track these participants closely to ensure they are placed in work activities as soon as a child care provider has been located.

An inability to obtain child care must be based on the following reasons:

1. **Formal child care is not available within a reasonable distance from the parent's home or work site.** Formal child care means at least one licensed or certified child care facility with space available for the child for which there is no documentation that the facility would be harmful to the health or safety of the child.

Reasonable distance means no more than 60 minutes travel time one-way, using available transportation, from the parent's home to the child care provider's location to the parent's work site. Travel time may be extended up to 90 minutes one-way if there is a good placement opportunity for the participant AND the participant is willing to enter into this arrangement.

and

2. **Informal child care by a relative or under other arrangements is unavailable or unsuitable.** Informal child care is defined as an arrangement in which the child care provider is neither licensed nor certified. Participants who use this type of arrangement are not eligible for W-2 child care assistance. Informal child care arrangements may be used by any W-2 participant; however, a participant cannot be required to use informal child care.

If the participant fails to demonstrate an inability to obtain child care, s/he must resume W-2 work activities or face payment reductions, or possibly a strike, for nonparticipation.

## **CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

### **Learnfare Case Management Services**

Learnfare is a component of the W-2 program that requires all school age children of W-2 participants to be enrolled in school. Students who are not enrolled in school or who are dropouts, returning dropouts, habitual truants or minor parents are required to participate in case management. Learnfare case management focuses on services to maintain school enrollment, improve school attendance and prepare children for a career. For high school students, Learnfare case management focuses on graduation, career and/or employment planning, job readiness and job seeking/job retention activities. For minor parents, Learnfare case management also focuses on parenting and life skills. A financial penalty may be imposed for not being enrolled in school or not participating in case management, if required to do so. The financial penalty is in the amount of \$50 per month per child, not to exceed \$150 per W-2 group per month. A financial penalty must not be imposed on students who volunteer for case management. The FEP or Learnfare specialist determines if a student and his/her parent had good cause for failing to cooperate with Learnfare case management.

### **Case Management for Pregnant Women**

A pregnant woman whose pregnancy is medically verified and who is both nonfinancially and financially eligible except that she is not a custodial parent of a dependent child is eligible for job search assistance and case management services provided by the W-2 agency. Case management services may include making the appropriate referral to access child care or discussing employment goals for the W-2 group when the child is over 12 weeks. A pregnant woman cannot be required to participate in an employment position until the child is 12 weeks old. There is no penalty for noncooperation with child support for a pregnant woman or while the child is less than 60 days old.

### **Minor Parent Case Management**

Custodial parents are not eligible to participate in a W-2 work training placement until they have reached the age of 18. By eliminating eligibility for cash assistance for a minor, W-2 has created a stronger tie of responsibility to the adult parent and a better opportunity for the minor parent to complete high school and prepare for a career.

A custodial minor parent is eligible, regardless of income, assets, or living arrangement to meet with a FEP, who can provide a minor parent with information about available child care services, high school and school to work preparation, employment and financial planning, family planning services, community resources and eligibility for Medicaid, food stamps and other food and nutrition services.

A minor parent living independently is counseled by the W-2 agency on the importance of living in an adult-supervised living arrangement, beginning with the assumption that the best option is for the minor to live with his or her parent(s). If needed, other living arrangements are discussed, such as living with a kinship care relative. In some cases, the W-2 agency must refer the minor parent to child welfare authorities and advocate for locating a suitable living arrangement.

### **Non-custodial Parent (NCP) Case Management**

W-2 NCP case management is a voluntary program for the unemployed or underemployed NCPs. The W-2 agency may provide job search assistance and employment and training assistance as part of the case management provided to non-custodial parents to facilitate entry into the labor market and increase capacity to make consistent child support payments for the benefit of the minor child(ren). The goal is to enable W-2 custodial parents to become self-sufficient by ensuring regular child support payments in combination with employment. In addition, it is expected that by meeting their financial obligation, non-custodial parents will also demonstrate enhanced contact with, and emotional investment in their children.

In order for a NCP to be eligible for these services, s/he must be under a current child support order or in the process of having one established, and the custodial parent must be a W-2 participant.

## **OTHER FEATURES OF WISCONSIN'S TANF PROGRAM**

### **Credit Establishment and Credit Repair Assistance**

Financial literacy services, which include training on budgeting, obtaining and managing credit and overall money management, are one of the supports W-2 participants need to maintain self-sufficiency. To address this need, W-2 agencies provide or contract with another entity to provide credit establishment and credit repair assistance to W-2 participants to ensure their financial stability.

### **Job Access Loans**

Job Access Loans (JALs) are short-term, no interest loans designed to meet expenses related to obtaining or maintaining employment. JALs are designed for an individual needing assistance because of a discrete financial crisis that cannot be resolved with personal resources and other funding sources are not available. This crisis, if unresolved, could develop into a long-term problem in which the individual may become dependent upon a W-2 employment position. The individual must meet financial and non-financial eligibility conditions under the W-2 program.

The W-2 agency can approve a JAL from \$25 to \$1600. Some examples of appropriate use of JALs include:

- Car loans for purchase of a vehicle or repairs to provide transportation to work or to look for work;
- Fees for obtaining a drivers license;
- Clothing/uniforms for work;
- Rent or security deposits, to prevent eviction and enable the individual to obtain or maintain employment; and
- Self-employment/entrepreneurial activities. As a condition of any self-employment or entrepreneurial loan, the W-2 agency must require a business plan approved by a traditional loan institution or an organization specializing in entrepreneurial efforts, such as the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation or the National Foundation for Training Entrepreneurship.

The W-2 agency has sole discretion in determining and authorizing JALs. The loan recipient must develop a repayment plan approved by the W-2 agency. The loan may be paid back in cash or through a combination of cash and volunteer community work.



### **Emergency Assistance**

The Emergency Assistance (EA) program is designed to meet the immediate needs of eligible persons facing a current emergency. The emergency must be due to fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis, impending homelessness, or homelessness. EA is intended to avoid destitution of a child and provide living arrangements for the child in a home. It is not necessary for individuals to receive any other forms of public assistance in order to receive EA. W-2 agencies are responsible for administration of EA. However, in Milwaukee, the EA is administered by the Milwaukee County Human Services Agency through a subcontract with the American Red Cross.

An EA group must contain a child under age 18 and a caretaker relative with whom a child is living. Each member of the EA group must be a resident of Wisconsin and a citizen or qualifying alien, as defined under W-2 policy. The amount of the EA payment is the lower of:

- \$150 for each eligible EA group member;
- the amount requested by the group; or
- the total financial need due to the emergency.

The actual amount of necessary unpaid monthly expenses (housing, food, utilities, transportation, medical and child care) is considered when determining the total financial need of the group. If an individual does not agree with the agency's decision regarding EA eligibility or payment amount, a W-2 Fact Finding Review may be requested.

### **TANF Eligible Food Stamp Recipients**

Wisconsin plans to use TANF funds for employment and training services for food stamp recipients who: 1) have income at or below 130 percent of the FPL; 2) are the custodial parents of minor children; and 3) are mandatory participants in the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program. These individuals will be eligible for the same services provided under W-2 with the exception of a placement in a W-2 employment position (i.e. Trial Job, CSJ, or W-2T). Eligible activities may include job readiness and motivational activities, employment counseling, job seeking skills training, job survival/retention training, life skills training, and short term education and training directly related to employment opportunities.

### **Community Reinvestment**

Under the Wisconsin Works Implementation Contract, agencies may access unspent contract funding to provide Community Reinvestment (CR) activities to TANF eligible families under 200 percent of FPL with no asset test.

W-2 agencies that choose to access the CR funds must submit a plan to the Department outlining how those monies will be used. CR plans must be consistent with the requirements and purposes of TANF, and provide services allowable under TANF. Agencies were also instructed to carefully consider alternative options rather than spending CR funds on activities that would meet the federal definition of "assistance." Consequently, the vast majority of CR activities are not "assistance" as federally defined.

Agencies were allowed to use CR funding to provide services to families already described in the Wisconsin TANF State Plan effective 10/1/98. These plans either sought to provide the full range of TANF activities described in this plan to a broader TANF population (any family below 200 percent of FPL) or initiated activities for the W-2 population that were allowable although not mandated.

Wisconsin intends to authorize CR funding for additional TANF allowable activities such as those outlined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families in the publication, "Helping Families Achieve Self-Sufficiency – A Guide on Funding Services for Children and Families through the TANF Program."

Agencies will use CR funding to provide a broad array of non-monetary services not already described in this plan to families including: support for work activities, housing, transportation, education and training, child care, legal assistance, mental health services, AODA services, domestic abuse services, local telephone service, developmental and learning disabilities services, child welfare, family formation and pregnancy prevention activities, youth and employer services, and respite care. CR donations will be made to clothing providers, food pantries, and other community resources aimed at improving job readiness, retention and advancement for TANF families. These activities do not duplicate services already available in the geographic region and will otherwise be provided in accordance with the TANF final regulations.

Examples of services provided using CR funding to enhance or supplement the family income or assets include programs such as: small business loans, Individual Development Accounts, job retention bonuses, job and school retention attendance bonuses, family development accounts, entrepreneurial programs, quick start loans, and other Community Reinvestment loans and grants.

## **SEGREGATED STATE TANF PROGRAMS**

### **Department of Workforce Development**

As delineated in the preamble to the final Federal TANF Regulations, many factors contribute to poverty and dependency, and solutions to these problems should not be "one size fits all." The system should allow States and localities to develop diverse and creative responses to their own problems. Wisconsin has taken this opportunity provided under TANF to partner with communities and other organizations to serve families in new, more creative, and more effective ways. The following programs are part of the State's TANF program and are funded with either co-mingled TANF and state funds or segregated funds.

#### **Child Support Pass-Through**

Cooperation with the child support agency is a requirement for receipt of W-2 services. Wisconsin has been given authority to operate a Child Support Demonstration waiver project to pass collected child support directly to W-2 participants. Under W-2, individuals participating in an employment position will receive all or a portion of the current child support money collected each month, depending on their random group assignment. W-2 applicants are assigned to one of three groups: control, experimental or non-experimental. Participants assigned to the experimental and non-experimental groups will directly receive all current child support collected on their behalf. Participants in the control group will receive up to \$50 or the state share of the child support collected, whichever is greater. Child support received by the family is not used to determine eligibility for W-2 and does not affect W-2 payments. The state share of the amounts passed through to W-2 recipients will be included in Wisconsin's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) calculation.

#### **Burials**

Funding is available when a W-2 participant (individuals placed in W-2 work training placements, custodial parents of infants, and W-2 group members) dies and the estate of the deceased recipient is insufficient to pay the funeral, burial and cemetery expenses of the deceased recipient. The lesser of \$1,000 or the cemetery expenses that are not paid by the estate of the deceased and other persons and the lesser of \$1,000 or the funeral and burial expenses not paid by the estate of the deceased and other persons may be paid. No payment is made for funeral and burial expenses if the costs for funeral and burial expenses exceed \$3,500. No payment is made for cemetery expenses if the costs for cemetery expenses exceed \$3,500 [s. 49.30, Stats.]. Costs for these burials will be paid with segregated state funding, which Wisconsin will include in its MOE calculation.

#### **Partnership for Full Employment (PFE)**

The PFE is a service delivery concept which provides comprehensive services to eligible persons to find and retain employment in order to achieve self-sufficiency and reduce dependency on public assistance. This service delivery concept provides the structure within which W-2 is operated in Wisconsin. It emphasizes coordination and collaboration with other available employment related programs and services to assist W-2 participants and applicants in achieving self-sufficiency. Services are provided to individuals before they make formal application for public assistance so that they can be diverted to employment, while the individual is receiving public assistance, and following job placement to ensure the successful transition from welfare to work and employment retention. Services are also provided to employers to create appropriate employment opportunities for low income families, to facilitate job retention by eligible persons, and to otherwise enable the effective participation of low income persons in

the workforce. These services are consistent with the goal of the Act under section 401(a)(2) to “end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.”

The PFE provides a range of services from “light” to “intensive” depending on the needs of the client. It is anticipated that the most intensive, and thus the most expensive, services will be provided to W-2 eligible individuals. The most important advantage that the PFE offers these individuals is equal access with other job seekers to potential employers. Candidates are presented to employers with no distinction between W-2 eligible and non-W-2 eligible job seekers.

### **Human Services**

Wisconsin received federal approval in the FFY 1995 JOBS Supportive Service Plan to include human service expenditures made on behalf of AFDC recipients as eligible for federal reimbursement. Services listed in the Supportive Services plan include child care; family preservation services; and AODA and mental health services not covered under the Medicaid program. The costs of the services which are associated with the assignment of non-medical alcohol and drug abuse activities and mental health services to enable participation in the W-2 program and obtain and/or maintain successful employment, are not covered by Medicaid. To the extent local agencies identify non-federal resources spent on TANF-eligible individuals, Wisconsin will include these amounts in its MOE calculation.

### **Child Care**

Wisconsin provides child care subsidies to families whose income is less than 165 percent of the FPL regardless of whether they are or have been on welfare. Beginning in March 2000, initial income eligibility increased to 185 percent of FPL. Families may remain eligible with income up to 200 percent of the FPL. There are no time limits for family eligibility and parents in W-2 child care have the option of selecting a child care provider from a wide variety of choices. Eligibility for child care is determined by W-2 agencies.

In addition to using the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and state general purpose revenues, Wisconsin plans to use federal TANF funds to pay for child care for participants in W-2. Wisconsin plans to transfer at least 20 percent of the TANF block grant to the CCDF as allowed under PRWORA.

### **Employment Transportation Program and Job Ride**

Reliable, affordable and efficient transportation is critical to self-sufficiency. Wisconsin has made it a priority to work with job seekers, employers and local service providers to address transportation needs for low-income families. Employment and training staff (W-2 agencies, Job Centers, other local partners) work closely with Community Steering Committees, Children’s Services Networks, existing transportation service providers, Regional Planning Commissions, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and employers to collaborate on how to maximize the use of existing resources and meet the employment transportation needs of their community.

W-2 agencies use innovative methods to meet participant transportation needs such as arranging van pools, setting up volunteer driver programs, accessing loan resources for personal vehicle purchase and repair, encouraging employer-based transportation programs, expanding transit hours and service areas and hiring transportation coordinators. These programs are available to people who are enrolled in a component of the W-2 program and are generally offered on an individual basis.

DWD also operates the Job Ride Program in Milwaukee County. This reverse commute vanpool program provides transportation assistance to low income, central city workers trying to access suburban jobs. The employers targeted are not currently accessible by public transportation or other means of regularly scheduled transit. Many inner city residents who have lost employment opportunities have found it difficult to reach areas where jobs are being created (suburbs) and will have a better opportunity to obtain and retain employment with this transportation program. This program is funded primarily with state dollars, though DWD has set-aside some TANF dollars to help expand the program the last several years. The expansion allows the program to increase the focus on low income workers and expand access to additional employers. TANF expansion of this program will continue in 2000.

DWD has created a joint grant program with the Department of Transportation (DOT), called the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP), to use those TANF funds along with local dollars and some DOT dollars to draw down Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) dollars from the Federal Transit Administration. This has allowed Wisconsin to maximize resources and encourage even greater coordination and collaboration among local providers. The objectives of the program are to help low income individuals and families obtain, retain, and advance in employment. All transportation activities are eligible, but they must be based on needs assessment and local planning.

The grant program began April 1, 2000. Local agencies, authorities, non-profits, and tribal governing agencies are eligible to apply and local collaboration between all interested parties is required for needs assessment, plan development, and local implementation. Applicants are required to demonstrate a quantifiable need for assistance and develop a detailed action plan to serve the TANF population. The plan requires input from employers and potential participants.

Because there are a mix of funding sources, eligibility criteria are varied which allows for increased flexibility at the local level. With regard to the TANF dollars, all current and potential W-2 participants, food stamp recipients and others receiving supportive services, whose gross income is at or below 200 percent of the FPL, are eligible for assistance. WETAP further enhances the strong commitment Wisconsin has made to helping low income families overcome the employment transportation barrier.

### **State Employment Options Program**

This program, administered in coordination with the Department of Employment Relations, provides workshops and videos to individuals in W-2 and other work programs, instructing them in the process of obtaining employment with the State of Wisconsin. In addition, the state contracts with the Dane County Private Industry Council whereby the state contracts for the services of three state employment specialists who create CSJ, W-2 T, Limited Term Employment (LTE), contract and permanent state job opportunities in all of the state agencies and have cooperative working agreements with sixteen of the largest state agencies.

### **Workforce Attachment and Advancement**

The Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA) program provides funding to W-2 agencies and Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to develop innovative employment retention and advancement strategies for the TANF eligible population.

Through WAA, W-2 agencies and WDBs will work collaboratively with employers, training providers, educational institutions, organized labor and other partners in the employment and training services delivery system to provide a variety of services tailored to the needs of their

local communities. The primary objective of the program is to promote upward mobility through training that prepares persons for higher-paying employment.

The WAA funds will serve the TANF-eligible population of low-income families under 200% of poverty and noncustodial parents of low-income children. In addition, the funds may be used to provide services to employers to assist with retention and advancement of the TANF-eligible population. Agencies receiving WAA funds are expected to seek extensive input from local stakeholders on what services will be provided under the program. While the local W-2 agency and WDB allocations are made in two separate funding tracks, services under the WAA will be delivered in an integrated manner.

To receive funding, each W-2 agency and WDB was required to submit a plan by January 15, 2000, for approval by the Department. Each plan includes a program description, local planning process, outreach and enrollment strategies, target populations, performance outcomes, and scope of work. Local W-2 agencies and WDBs had the option to submit separate, joint or combined plans.

### **Community Youth Grants**

The Department will fund Community Youth Grants to provide services that improve the social, academic and employment skills of low income, TANF eligible youth, from 5–18 years of age, whose family income does not exceed 200 percent of the FPL. Community Youth Grants will be used to expand existing innovative programs or develop and implement new approaches that address the specific needs of low income youth. The funding will target programs that allow the youth to participate in individual and group activities in a safe environment. Through these activities, the programs will seek to improve social, academic and employment skills and strengthen relationships between youth and their parents, schools and neighborhoods.

The grants will be distributed to local agencies which will administer programs in their neighborhoods or communities. Under Wisconsin statutes, seven organizations were targeted to receive Community Youth Grant funding. These include the Wisconsin chapters of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the Silver Spring Neighborhood Association, the Safe and Sound Initiative in Milwaukee, Wisconsin Good Samaritan Project, Inc., the Youth Leadership Academy, Inc. and United Community Center, the Milwaukee Passports for Youth Program, and New Concepts Self-Development Center.

In addition, 28 agencies received money through a competitive process. Some examples of the kinds of program activities that were allowed include counseling and youth development services, drop-out/truancy prevention strategies, gang violence prevention, academic remediation and advancement, career choices and counseling, AODA prevention, and parenting skills.

### **Literacy Grants**

Illiteracy is one of the common barriers many of the individuals remaining in W-2 face. Literacy grants reinforce for W-2 participants and agencies the importance of literacy. These grants, administered in coordination with the Governor's Office of Literacy, provide services to TANF eligible individuals and children at or under 200 percent of the FPL. Grants are provided directly to existing literacy providers for adult literacy services, workplace literacy services and tutoring plan services for children. The literacy providers collaborate with the W-2 agency to ensure that services are provided to W-2 participants as needed. Once individuals are identified as likely to benefit from these services, the literacy providers offer one-on-one tutoring as well as small

group instruction. The literacy providers work with participants to develop literacy goals and monitor progress and outcomes.

### **Legal Services**

TANF funding will be provided to the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) for the provision of legal services to families whose income is at or below 200 percent of poverty. WisTAF makes high quality grants to agencies that provide civil legal services to low income clients or programs for the administration of justice. Funding will be distributed to WisTAF in proportion to the amount of private donations received to fund services for eligible families, and only after the submission of a report on the amount of private donations received to fund legal services for eligible families.

### **English for Southeast Asian Children**

The Wausau School District will utilize TANF funding for a program to teach English to three-, four-, and five-year old Southeast Asian children to promote success in school among families in the Southeast Asian community.

### **Department of Health and Family Services**

#### **Domestic Abuse Services**

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence received TANF funding to support the cost of a staff person to provide assistance in obtaining legal services to domestic abuse victims. The purpose of this funding is to improve legal assistance for victims from under-represented populations towards the goal of favorable legal outcomes. This work is also to include the development and distribution of materials to these victims that inform them of their legal rights, courses of action and possible legal remedies. TANF funds will target families with minor children, with income at or below 250 percent of poverty. Agencies must either obtain income information or eligibility information for another relevant program (e.g. W-2, food stamps, energy assistance, Medicaid, free or reduced school lunch, child care assistance) to determine who qualifies as TANF-eligible.

#### **Kinship Care**

Through the federal block grant funded under TANF, Wisconsin pays a cash benefit called a Kinship Care payment to Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) caretakers of a minor. This is a child only payment. NLRR caretakers are providing a service that allows displaced children to remain in the care of their extended family. The Kinship Care program preserves the ability to place children with NLRRs while providing appropriate oversight of placements to ensure children's safety and well-being. The Division of Children and Family Services in the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) oversees the administration of the program.

Relative caretakers are not required to participate in W-2 work training placements to receive financial support for the NLRR children. W-2 is a work-based system intended to provide opportunities to parents to provide for their children. Relatives caring for children who are not their legal responsibility are providing a service to the child and the community and have no work requirements.

Under Kinship Care, NLRR caretakers are eligible for a child only benefit if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The Kinship Care relative applies to the county or tribal social/human services child welfare agency. The agency completes an assessment and determines if there is a need for the child to be placed with the kinship care relative and if the placement with the kinship care relative is in the best interest of the child.
2. The county or tribal social/human services child welfare agency determines that the child meets one or more of the criteria specified in s. 48.13, Stats., or s. 938.13, Stats., or that the child would be at risk of meeting one or more of those criteria if the child were to remain in his or her home.
3. The county or tribal social/human services child welfare agency conducts a criminal background check on the kinship care relative, any other adult resident of the kinship care relative's home and any employees or prospective employees of the kinship care relative who have or would have regular contact with the child. The primary purpose of the background check is to determine if they have any arrests or convictions that could adversely affect the child or the kinship care relative's ability to care for the child.
4. The Kinship Care relative cooperates with the county or tribal social/human services child welfare agency in the application process, including applying for other forms of assistance for which the kinship care relative may be eligible.
5. The child for whom the kinship care relative is providing care and maintenance is not receiving supplemental security income (SSI) or state supplemental payments.

The Kinship Care payment amount is similar to previous AFDC payment levels in Wisconsin--\$215 per child per month. In addition, kinship care children will remain non-financially eligible for Medicaid and food stamp benefits. The income and assets of kinship care relative caretakers are not considered in the kinship care eligibility determination. A kinship care eligibility review must be completed at least every twelve months. See the enclosed statutory language at s. 48.57(3m), Stats., for the statutory requirements of Kinship Care.

### **SSI Caretaker Supplement**

W-2 legislation provides that an individual who is a recipient of SSI is not eligible for participation in a W-2 employment position. Recipients of SSI have been determined permanently disabled, incapable of supporting themselves through employment, and therefore not appropriate for placement in a time-limited employment program.

To help with the support of SSI recipients' dependent children, a monthly benefit funded under TANF, called SSI Caretaker Supplement (C-Supp), is issued for each eligible child who meets all of the following criteria:

1. The child's sole custodial parent receives SSI or the child lives with both custodial parents and both receive SSI. In either circumstance, the caretaker(s) receive \$250 for the first eligible child and \$150 for each subsequent eligible child.
2. The child meets financial and non-financial AFDC eligibility criteria. If the family passes the AFDC eligibility test, the C-Supp payment is made.
3. The child does not receive SSI benefits.



The C-Supp program is separate from the W-2 program and is administered by Wisconsin's DHFS, Division of Supportive Living.

### **Milwaukee Child Welfare Coordinator**

Section 48.48(16m), Stats., as created by 1997 Wisconsin Act 27, directs the Secretary of the Wisconsin DHFS to employ an individual to coordinate the provision of child welfare services in Milwaukee County with the implementation of the W-2 program to ensure that both programs interact effectively. The Director of Urban Development was appointed in May 1998 and will work under the direction of the Secretary of DHFS. Wisconsin is using TANF block grant money to fund half of this position. The other half of the money to fund the position is provided by DHFS. The Director will have responsibilities in four major areas: coordination with W-2; coordination with AODA, mental health, and substance abuse providers; coordination with Milwaukee Public Schools reform; and Department representation on issues involving the changes in federal welfare reform that ended the automatic links between Medicaid and cash assistance. The Director will also help enlist community and neighborhood resources in the building of family resiliency and self-sufficiency.

In Milwaukee County, many families having contact with the child welfare system are also W-2 participants. Coordinating these services in Milwaukee County helps families in W-2, and promotes family responsibility.

### **Early Identification of Pregnancy**

The Early Identification of Pregnancy (EIDP) program funds pregnancy tests and other services primarily for women whose incomes are at or below 250 percent of the FPL. Under a waiver that DHFS is required by state law to submit to the federal government, women whose initial pregnancy tests are negative would be able to have access to Medicaid-funded family planning services with the goal of preventing future unwanted pregnancies. TANF funding will be utilized for outreach activities to increase public awareness of the program and for case management services that will inform individual women about particular services.

### **AODA Grants**

The Department of Health and Family Services in cooperation with the Department of Workforce Development, solicited statewide proposals to provide new and expanded community-based alcohol and other drug abuse treatment services for families at or under 200 percent of the FPL, that they do the following:

- Meet the special needs of women and TANF eligible families with problems resulting from alcohol or other drug abuse.
- Emphasize parent education, vocational and housing assistance and coordination with other community programs and with treatment under intensive care.

Grant awards were made on January 13, 2000, to seven treatment providers serving 15 different counties and one tribe. The grant awards were made to those vendors who have clearly demonstrated that TANF eligibility will be determined by W-2, county, or tribal human/social services agencies and are collaborating with them on the delivery of AODA, employment, and employment-related activities.

### **WIC Program**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides food and nutrition information to help keep pregnant and breastfeeding women, new mothers, and infants and children up to age five healthy and strong. Participants must have a nutritional

need, and a household income of less than or equal to 185% of the federal poverty level (or would be automatically income eligible if receiving W-2, Food Stamps or Medicaid). TANF funding, transferred to the Department of Health and Family Services, will support WIC nutrition, education and outreach activities.

### **Wisconsin Immunization Program**

The Wisconsin Immunization Program distributes vaccines to public and private providers to immunize children (ages birth through eighteen years). TANF funding will be distributed for Immunization activity to serve persons at or below 200 percent of poverty. The Immunization Program will use TANF funds for outreach and education, to track preschool children, and insure they stay on schedule for recommended immunizations via reminder/recall notices to parents.

### **Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Pregnancy Services Board**

The Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Pregnancy Services Board distributes TANF-funded grants to organizations to provide adolescent pregnancy prevention programs and pregnancy services including health care, education, counseling, vocational training, social, and recreational services. Parents or parental figures must be involved in programs to promote positive family relationships.

### **Brighter Futures**

Under the Administration of the Department of Health and Family Services, the Brighter Futures program awards TANF-funded grants to nonprofit corporations and public agencies in Milwaukee County and county social services agencies in other counties. The purpose of the grants are for the prevention of youth violence, substance use and abuse, child abuse and neglect, and nonmarital pregnancy, and for the promotion of adolescent self-sufficiency.

### **Safety Services**

Under the administration of DHFS, the Safety Services program will provide up to five months of safety services to families referred by the assessment units of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County. DHFS will contract with a safety service coordinator for each of the five neighborhood service delivery sites. These coordinators will be responsible for managing the safety services program and providing safety services managers and providers.

During the period of service, an assigned safety services manager and provider will work with the family to assist them in controlling for child safety, stabilizing family functioning, and accessing necessary formal and informal supports. Families will receive services that are appropriate to their specific situation as determined by the assessment social worker and the safety services manager.

### **Child Welfare Prevention Services**

Under the administration of DHFS, the state will coordinate, implement, evaluate and manage a comprehensive and collaborative program to prevent child abuse and neglect in Milwaukee County. This lead agency will sub-contract with community-based organizations to provide services to families to prevent child abuse and neglect in Milwaukee County.

### **Department of Administration**

#### **Services to Address Homelessness**

The Department of Administration (DOA) will use TANF funds to expand resources available to serve families who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. The TANF funds will be

used to support agencies that provide shelter services to homeless individuals that are TANF-eligible, with up to 50 percent of the funds being used for non-medical alcohol and drug abuse services for homeless individuals.

### **Department of Military Affairs**

#### **Badger Challenge**

The Badger Challenge Program is a two-phase program for at-risk youth, ages 14 to 16, who are at risk of dropping out of school. Program participants funded with TANF must be members of TANF-eligible families under 200 percent of the FPL. Participants must voluntarily agree to attend the program and be drug-free during their stay. Phase I consists of a six week residential stay where cadets participate in activities to improve anger management, teamwork, leadership, following and personal growth. Phase II consists of post residential mentoring with community volunteers. A coordinator position organizes mentor-related activities in the various communities where Badger Challenge Program graduates are located.

### **Department of Public Instruction**

#### **Aid to Milwaukee Public Schools**

A TANF appropriation to Milwaukee Public Schools provides funding for early childhood education contracts with day care centers and alternative educational programs for Learnfare pupils.

#### **Head Start Expansion**

Through a transfer of TANF funds, the Department of Public Instruction will expand the number of Head Start programs that provide full-time care, in order to support low-income parent's work efforts. Additional emphasis will be put on developing Early Head Start programs.

### **Governor's Work-Based Learning Board**

#### **Self-Paced Youth Apprenticeship Program**

Under the administration of local Workforce Development Boards, the Self-Paced Youth Apprenticeship Program allows eligible students to meet the first year requirements of a youth apprenticeship program while also working towards a high school diploma or its equivalent. Through the program, employers hire youth apprentices for 10 to 20 hours per week and, through mentors, train students in industry-established skills. The employers pay students at least the minimum wage, provide worker's compensation and evaluate the student's performance. Program coordinators are hired to recruit students and employers, organize work sites, and identify and provide supportive services for students. Participants who fulfil the necessary requirements may earn a certificate recognizing skills attained through the apprenticeship.

#### **School-To-Work Initiative**

Wisconsin's School-to-Work Initiative is both an early intervention tool and an investment in Wisconsin's future workforce. It is estimated that 70 percent of the jobs will require significant training after high school and 60 percent of the new jobs will be in higher skill occupations. As part of our effort to enhance the future employability of all youth, including low-income individuals, Wisconsin's school-to-work initiative encompasses program and curricular changes aimed at better preparing youth to enter the workforce, immediately after high school or following post-secondary education. Youth who are better prepared to enter the workforce will

be less likely to rely on the welfare system for support during school or after graduation. Generally, school-to-work programs are aimed at:

- encouraging youth to plan for a career more thoroughly and at an earlier age;
- acquainting youth with alternatives to a baccalaureate degree (such as associate programs and apprenticeships); and
- forging partnerships between K-12 schools and technical colleges, universities and businesses in order to facilitate career pathways from school to the workforce.

The school-to-work initiative includes new and innovative programs in youth apprenticeship, career counseling centers, certified cooperative education, integrated curriculum (Tech Prep), university competency based admissions and post-secondary enrollment options. These programs are administered primarily by Wisconsin's DWD, the Department of Public Instruction, the Wisconsin Technical College System Board and the University of Wisconsin System. Fiscal responsibility rests with the DWD.

The focus of the TANF funding will be a "break the cycle" effort directed at our most vulnerable youth. For those in danger of remaining in a cycle of poverty and dependency, it will provide an alternative view of their future. It will help them to start planning for careers early and will provide them with a realistic view of the many opportunities available to them in the world of work.

Funding under TANF will be applied to the state administrative costs necessary to expand the school-to-work program in order to target low-income individuals who are needy per the TANF eligibility criteria. This effort will include additional outreach and assistance in designing local programs to meet the needs of youth and employers in all areas of the state, with emphasis on those areas with the highest concentrations of low-income individuals.

### **Southeast Youth Employment Program**

The Southeast Youth Employment Program provides grant money to Workforce Development Boards (WDB) in southeastern Wisconsin under a competitive process. The WDBs may subcontract with business and schools to develop one-year pilot programs for high school juniors and seniors to provide career exploration, academic training and technical training along with paid work experience.

### **Department of Revenue**

#### **TANF-Funded Earned Income Tax Credit**

Wisconsin's Department of Revenue provides a TANF-funded earned income tax credit (EITC) for the refundable portion of the Wisconsin's EITC program for low-income families. All families receiving the state credit are determined to be categorically eligible for TANF. (Note: Nonrefundable amounts and EITC payments made to qualified aliens are paid with state tax revenues).

This credit provides a supplement to the wages and self-employment income of lower-income workers with children living with them. Under the Wisconsin program, persons may be eligible to receive the tax credit if they or their spouse worked full or part-time during the tax year, had at least one qualifying child, were a full-year resident of Wisconsin, and qualified for the federal EIC. The state credit is calculated as a percentage of the federal credit as follows: four percent for families with one child; 14 percent for families with two children; and 43 percent for families with three or more children.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board**

#### **Family Resource Centers**

The Children's Trust Fund will utilize TANF dollars to support 17 Family Resource Centers around the state. Family Resource Centers primarily focus on parents and their children from birth to age three. Recognizing that all parents need help at some time, but that not all families need the same kind or intensity of support, Family Resource Centers have developed a wide range of services to meet the individual needs of community. The Family Resource Centers will use TANF funding to provide additional services for families up to 200 percent of the FPL including: parenting skills training; programs and local media campaigns to promote responsible fatherhood and increase the capacity for fathers to support their children emotionally; and activities to promote parental access and visitation.

## **SEPARATE STATE PROGRAMS**

Wisconsin operates several programs in addition to the federal TANF programs that are funded exclusively with state funds. These programs serve needy families that are ineligible per TANF restrictions (42 USC 608) and other low-income persons. Expenditures under these Separate State Programs will be distinctly tracked in the state's accounting system and will be counted toward the state's MOE requirement for TANF.

### **W-2 Services for Qualified Aliens**

The State of Wisconsin provides benefits and services to qualified aliens without regard to the restrictions found under 8 USC 1612 and 1613. W-2 groups whose adult parent or parents are non-citizens lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence, aliens granted asylum under 8 USC 1158, refugees admitted under 8 USC 1187, aliens paroled into the United States under 8 USC 1182 for at least one year, aliens whose deportation is being withheld under 8 USC 1254, and aliens who are granted conditional entry pursuant to 8 USC 1153 as in effect prior to April 1, 1980, will be subject to the same eligibility determination used for citizen applicants for W-2.

### **Food Stamp Benefits for Qualified Aliens**

Effective August 1, 1998, the State of Wisconsin provided state-funded food stamp benefits to qualified aliens and their dependent children who were made ineligible for food stamps solely due to provisions of PRWORA. The State is using eligibility determination and benefit levels used by the federal Food Stamp Program. FSET Services for those qualified aliens who would be mandatory participants under current federal guidelines are being provided under this program. Effective November 1, 1998, those qualified aliens newly eligible for federal food stamps benefits under the provisions of Public Law 105-185, the Agriculture Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) will be removed from the state-funded program.

### **W-2 Interim Assistance Program**

Adults who have filed an application for SSI and are waiting for a determination of SSI eligibility, and who meet all other W-2 eligibility requirements, will be enrolled in the W-2 Interim Assistance Program. Under this program, the participant will be placed in either a CSJ or a Transition position while the SSI eligibility decision is pending. A participant found eligible for SSI benefits will no longer be eligible for W-2 Interim Assistance. A participant who is denied SSI benefits will be transferred from the Interim Assistance Program to the W-2 program and placed in appropriate W-2 employment activities.

W-2 requires that a participant apply for other public assistance programs for which s/he may be eligible. This provision was included so that individuals who more appropriately should be served under the SSI program or another disability program could apply, be determined eligible, and move from W-2 to that program. The W-2 eligibility criteria also provide that an individual who is a recipient of SSI is not eligible for participation in a W-2 employment position.

Some W-2 participants would be eligible for SSI based on a disability determination. However, the federal Social Security Administration (SSA) has issued a policy requiring the entire W-2 benefit to be counted in the SSI income test if the SSI application was filed by the family member participating in a W-2 employment position and the W-2 benefit is funded with federal money. This federal policy interpretation would virtually disqualify all W-2 participants from becoming eligible for SSI because of excess income. By providing financial assistance through

a state funded program, Wisconsin has eliminated the receipt of W-2 benefits as a barrier to SSI eligibility.

### **Children First Program**

Children First is a program which promotes the emotional and financial responsibility of the non-custodial parent to his or her children. The non-custodial parent, who has no current means of meeting a child support obligation, is behind in child support payments and does not work full-time, may be ordered by the court to participate in the Children First program. The Children First program operates concurrently with the W-2 program. Federal approval for the use of waiver savings funds for Children First was received on January 4, 1993.

The Children First program requires a court order mandating non-custodial parent participation in the program. The program provides, at a minimum, job search assistance, work experience, education, training opportunities and case management services designed to enable eligible non-custodial parents to obtain and retain employment. The overall result, that of developing a bond between the non-custodial parent and the child(ren) and a communication line between the non-custodial parent and the custodial parent, is essential.

The Children First program is successfully completed when a participant makes full child support payments for three consecutive months or completes 16 weeks of employment and training activities. If these goals are not achieved, the participant may be referred to court for appropriate disposition. A crucial element to the success of the program is the partnership between the court system, the child support agency and the administering Children First agency.

## **Department of Health and Family Services**

### **Tribal Child Care**

DHFS administers the Tribal Child Care Program. Funds are distributed to eleven Wisconsin Indian tribes to provide low-income child care (child care for work activities) or crisis or respite child care in a manner that would be compatible with the federal requirements for use of federal child care and development funds (CCDF).

### **Substance Abuse Services**

DHFS solicited proposals to provide new or expanded community-based alcohol and other drug abuse treatment programs that meet the special needs of TANF eligible individuals, with problems resulting from alcohol or other drug abuse (AODA) in Milwaukee County. The grants were awarded based on the programs' ability to emphasize parent education, vocational and housing assistance and coordination with other community programs and with treatment under intensive care.

WISCONSIN'S TANF PROGRAM		
Federal TANF Programs	Segregated State TANF Programs	Separate State Programs
Income Maintenance Administration	Child Support Pass-Through	W-2 Services for Qualified Aliens
Emergency Assistance	Burials (Related to TANF Eligible)	Food Stamp Benefits for Qualified Aliens
State Administrative Costs	Partnership for Full Employment	W-2 Interim Assistance
Learnfare Case Management	Human Services	Children First
Fraud/FEV (related to TANF eligibles)	Child Care	Tribal Child Care
W-2 Office	Employment Transportation and Job Ride	Substance Abuse Services
W-2 (Trial Jobs, CSJ, W-2 T Payments)	State Employment Options Program	
Custodial Parent of Infant Children	Kinship Care	
Job Access Loans	SSI Caretaker Supplement	
Non-Custodial Parents of W-2 Children	Milwaukee Child Welfare Coordinator	
Case Management Only	Workforce Attachment and Advancement	
TANF-Eligible Food Stamp Recipients	Community Youth Grants	
Community Reinvestment Funds	Literacy Grants	
	Southeast Youth Employment Program	
	Legal Services	
	English for Southeast Asian Youth	
	Domestic Abuse Services	
	Early Identification of Pregnancy (EIDP)	
	AODA Grants	
	WIC Program	
	Wisconsin Immunization Program	
	Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Pregnancy Services Board	
	Brighter Futures	
	Services to Address Homelessness	
	Badger Challenge	
	Aid to Milwaukee Public Schools	
	Head Start Expansion	
	Self-Paced Youth Apprenticeship	
	School-to-Work Initiative	
	Family Resource Centers	
	Earned Income Tax Credit	
	Safety Services	
	Child Welfare Prevention Services	



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**ATTACHMENT B**  
-- State Plan Certifications --

This has been designed to enable the Chief Executive Officer of a State to certify that the State will operate its Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program in accordance with the statutory requirements in section 402(a)(2) through (7).

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**CERTIFICATIONS**

The State will operate a program to provide Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) so that the children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

This program is generally known as: Wisconsin Works

Executive Officer of the State (Name): Tommy G. Thompson, Governor

In administering and operating a program which provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with minor children under title IV-A of the Social Security Act, the State will:

1. Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program under part A in all political subdivisions of the State:

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and Department of Health and Family Services are the agencies responsible for administering the program;

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and Department of Health and Family Services are the agencies responsible for supervising the program;

2. Assure that local governments and private sector organizations:

- (a) Have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and
- (b) Have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.

3. Operate a Child Support Enforcement program under the State plan approved under part D;

4. Operate a Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program in accordance with part E, and certify that the State will take all necessary actions to ensure that children receiving assistance are eligible for medical assistance;

5. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a Tribal Family Assistance plan approved under Section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.

6. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage.

7. Make available to the public a summary of the State plan; and

**OPTIONAL CERTIFICATION**

[ ] The State has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to:

- (1) Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;
- (2) Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and
- (3) Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for as long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence. \*

**CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE STATE:**

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*Date*                      *Signature and Title*

\* **Wisconsin has found that it is counterproductive to categorically waive program requirements for those who are the most in need of help, such as victims of domestic abuse. In the past, individuals who were exempted from work requirements received no case management and were often forgotten. Under W-2, case managers will work closely with victims of domestic abuse to overcome special barriers that might exist. Wisconsin's strategy is supported by the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The coalition supports the state's decision not to opt for the FVO and has worked with the state to develop appropriate training on working successfully with victims of domestic abuse.**

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## ATTACHMENT C

-- Funding --

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### FUNDING

Section 403(a)(1)(A) provides that each eligible State shall be entitled to receive for each of the fiscal years 1996 through 2002, a grant in an amount equal to the State family assistance grant as defined in section 403(a)(1)(B).

#### I. Payments to Agency Administering the TANF Program

- Payments for the TANF program will be made to the organization managing the AFDC/JOBS programs as of August 22, 1996, unless the State indicates that the TANF administering agency is changed. If a change is made, describe the name, address and EIN number of the new organization.

#### II. State Payments for TANF Program

- Section 405 requires that grants be paid to States in quarterly installments, based on State estimates. The State's estimate for each quarter of the 1999 fiscal year by percentage is:

For FY 1999			
1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>

- For FY 2000, States should indicate below the percentage of TANF funds requested for only those quarters in which they plan to operate the program.

For FY 2000			
1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>

#### III. Changes and Inquiries

If a State determines that these estimates require changes, a letter indicating the change in percentages should be sent to your ACF Regional Office and to ACF's Central Office. The Central Office address is:

##### **The Administration for Children and Families**

*The Office of Program Support The Division of Grants Management*  
6th Floor, Aerospace Building  
370 L'Enfant Promenade  
Washington, D.C. 20447

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